

# NPAF National Patient Advocate Foundation

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May 31, 2016

Insurance Committee  
Senator Joe Hune, Chair  
Michigan Senate  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Mr. Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The National Patient Advocate Foundation (NPAF) serves as a voice for patients across America in regard to legislation and regulation that will benefit patient rights and needs. Our sister organization, Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF), provides direct assistance to patients throughout the country by helping to eliminate obstacles for patients trying to access quality healthcare. I am writing on behalf of these organizations and the Michigan patients we serve in regard to HB 4935, legislation that would make great improvements to health insurance plans affecting Michigan patients. NPAF would specifically like to recognize and support the provisions that relate to the time frames in which insurers must respond to prior authorization requests for prescription drugs.

Prior authorization is a case management tool used by insurers intended to help standardize care and control costs; however, current prior authorization procedures create tremendous access problems for patients and can be burdensome for providers as the process is labor intensive, time consuming, and costly. HB 4935 would require that the insurer make a determination on drug coverage and notify the patient and prescribing physician of the determination within 72 hours from when the prior authorization request was made, and for expedited reviews, within 24 hours. This provision will improve the prior authorization process tremendously and help ensure that patients receive the quality healthcare they need. NPAF also advocates for a universal prior authorization process with user-friendly forms no longer than two pages; allowing for electronic submission of prior authorization requests; and for the prescribing physician to override an insurer's determination, if the original prescription for the patient is deemed medically necessary.

In 2015, PAF served over 80,000 patients nationally due to obstacles, like prior authorization, to receiving healthcare. By voting to advance HB 4935, the committee will help to remove one of those obstacles from affecting Michigan patients. We urge the immediate passage of HB 4935 to reduce the inefficiency of the current prior authorization process, improve communication between the insurer and the prescriber, and, most of all, to allow Michigan patients to receive their treatment in a manner that is consistent with quality healthcare. Please feel free to contact me directly at [Melissa.Williams@npaf.org](mailto:Melissa.Williams@npaf.org) or at 202-573-6459 if you would like to further discuss NPAF's position on this issue.

Sincerely,

*Melissa J. Williams*

Melissa Lorenzo Williams, MPH  
Coordinator, State Government Relations

Cc: Members of the Senate Committee of Insurance